Declaration of the Chairpersons
of member institutions
of the Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean
to celebrate the 20th anniversary of its creation

The Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean: a strategic partner
in the drive for European cohesion policy

The Euroregion Pyrenees–Mediterranean, created on 29th October 2024 and a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) since 2009, is a cooperative political organisation between **the French Occitania Region,** the **Generalitat of Catalonia** and the **Government of the Balearic Islands**, one of the first to be recognised by the European Union (EU).

As the only Euroregion with both a mainland area and an archipelago, the Euroregion Pyrenees-Mediterranean embodies the geographical diversity of the Mediterranean basin. Its members deplore the effects of the severe flooding that recently struck Valencia and other areas close to the Euroregion, showing how vulnerable this region is to extreme weather conditions, made worse by climate change. It highlights the need for proper multi-level governance to prevent natural risks and to involve the EU in rebuilding the areas concerned. They have therefore agreed a joint action plan to tackle these challenges.

Against the current backdrop of changes in European governance, the Euroregion, as a pioneer in regional and cross-border cooperation, is emphasising the growing importance of the regions for the future of Europe. As such, **the representatives of the Euroregion,** meeting today in Barcelona to celebrate its 20th anniversary, are establishing themselves as major players in European cohesion policy and declare:

- **That the European Union must continue to encourage the direct involvement of regional and local authorities, as well as European regional and local cooperation institutions**, in the governance of European programmes, from their inception to implementation, while taking into account balanced and varied regional approaches.

- **That European cohesion policy must always be designed and implemented based on regionally oriented programmes**, reflecting the regional priorities in order to address current and future challenges.

- That in the interests of greater efficiency, **cohesion policy must give greater prominence to Euroregions**, in keeping with the recommendations of the 9th report on EU cohesion concerning multi-level governance.

- That with this in mind, and to ensure a fair regional approach, the **European Union should abolish the 150km limit between maritime borders** currently set as a maximum distance by the current regulations on European territorial cooperation in order to qualify for support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This limit should not apply to island territories sharing the same maritime catchment area, since Articles 174 and 175 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU require different treatment for islands. The Euroregion, one of whose members is an island region, cannot fully benefit from the Interreg cross-border cooperation programmes. Adapting these European regulations to the realities of the region would enable more suitable and balanced cross-border maritime and land development.

- That the Euroregion **urges the Spanish and French governments to implement Article 30.2 of the Treaty of friendship and cooperation between the Kingdom of Spain and the French Republic**, of 19th January 2023, on cross-border cooperation, in which they undertake to provide 'border authorities and border cooperation agencies with powers to stimulate trade and cooperation, including the creation and provision of joint public services'.

- That the Euroregion welcomes the fact that the Council of the European Union has agreed a negotiating mandate for a regulation that facilitates cross-border interactions and removes legal and administrative obstacles to the provision of cross-border services and infrastructures, and to cross-border employment. It calls on the Spanish and French governments to promote this initiative.

- That the Euroregion will closely monitor the preparation of the next **European multiannual budgetary framework** in order to avoid blanket centralisation. Instead, we hope that the regions will have a greater say in financial negotiations and in the implementation of European cohesion and territorial cooperation policies.

- That the new European executive will have to provide an **ambitious budget for cohesion policy** to meet the various challenges of all the Euroregions, and particularly those such as the Euroregion which includes island territories.

- **That the creation of European financial instruments dedicated to EGTCs and Euroregions** is needed to support the development and sustainability of these structures, which serve European citizens across borders.

- That all **European programmes should recognise the role of Euroregions as transnational institutions** representing partner regions from several EU Member States.

- That the Euroregion calls on the Spanish and French governments to speed up the implementation of the Mediterranean rail corridor and cross-border energy and maritime connections.

- That the Euroregion calls for an urgent review of the **Common Fisheries Policy**, in line with the position expressed in the Barcelona Appeal 'To save Mediterranean fisheries', adopted on 4th October 2022.

In summary, the Euroregion members:

- Request closer interaction between the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Euroregions.

- Welcome the appointment of a new Executive Vice-President of the European Commission with responsibility for cohesion and reform.

- Propose to meet the new European executive to share their vision, make their specific features understood and offer their support for the implementation of an ambitious, inclusive and resilient cohesion policy in their region.

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